United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council decides unanimously to renew UNOSOM II mandate until 31 May 1994; asks Secretary-General to report by 15 January 1994 on progress made in Somalia and to provide updated plan for Operation's future concerted strategy; says it will undertake fundamental review of mandate by 1 February 1994 in light of report and plan.

+ Three parties to Bosnian conflict, meeting in Geneva under auspices of UNHCR, agree to suspend hostilities to allow humanitarian deliveries; say peace is needed if catastrophe is to be averted this winter.

+ Special Representative Stoltenberg tells Security Council that despite tremendous efforts and some successes in former Yugoslavia, United Nations can not make peace for parties, but can only help them to do so.

+ Secretary-General welcomes agreement reached in South Africa on interim constitution; pledges continued support for peace process; General Assembly President says tolerance and cooperation should prevail in lead-up to 1994 election.

+ In address at West Point Military Academy, Secretary-General says success of United Nations peace operations depends on finding balance between inaction and total intervention; multilateralism is key, with no one country dominating operation.

+ Secretary-General appoints Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, as Special Representative for Burundi.

+ Italy tells Third Committee of need for United Nations human rights court to deal with disputes between individuals and States.

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For information media- -not an official record

+ Committee on Palestinian Rights adopts report to General Assembly, calling for renewed international support for Palestinian people to ensure the successful implementation of recent peace agreements.

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Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council today renewed the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) until 31 May 1994. The Council asked the Secretary-General to report to it by 15 January 1994 on progress made in achieving national reconciliation by the Somali people and in attaining political, security and humanitarian goals, and to provide an updated plan setting out UNOSOM II's future concerted strategy with regard to its political, security and humanitarian activities. The Council said it would undertake a fundamental review of UNOSOM II's mandate by 1 February 1994 in the light of that report and plan. It took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 886 (1993).

The Council urged all parties in Somalia, including movements and factions, to accelerate their efforts to achieve political reconciliation, peace and security, and to immediately abide by the Addis Ababa cease-fire and disarmament agreements. It underscored the importance of the establishment of district and regional councils, an interim national authority, and an operational police, penal and judiciary system as soon as feasible. The Council reminded all Somali parties that continued United Nations involvement in the country depended on their active cooperation and tangible progress towards a political settlement.

The Council emphasized the link between national rehabilitation and progress in the process of national reconciliation, and encouraged donor countries to contribute to the country's rehabilitation as demonstrable political progress occurred. The Council requested the Secretary-General to ask the Somalia Trust Fund Committee to review claims and make payments on an urgent basis, and urged Member States to make funds available for priority projects, including the reestablishment of the Somali police and demining, on an urgent basis.

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The three parties to the Bosnian conflict, meeting in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, today signed a Joint Declaration providing for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to avert a humanitarian catastrophe this winter.

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban agreed to suspend hostilities and to allow humanitarian access by the most effective land routes; to ensure complete and secure freedom of movement for personnel of the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations; and to allow the UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to determine the content of assistance and to ensure that it was not used for military purposes. The

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parties also undertook to ensure that humanitarian assistance reached the intended civilian beneficiaries; to release, in accordance with ICRC principles, all civilians unlawfully detained; and to ensure that military and civilian administrations honoured their commitments with respect for freedom of movement and other human rights and the Geneva Conventions.

Mrs. Ogata appealed to the signatorees to honour their commitments and to redouble their efforts to reach a just and lasting peace. She warned that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were in a desperate situation and said that if the commitments were ignored, the responsibility of the three parties would be "direct and inescapable".

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Special Representative Thorvald Stoltenberg today told the Security Council that while the United Nations had made tremendous efforts in the former Yugoslavia, and had achieved some successes there, it could not make peace for the parties -- it could only help them to do so. "No one should underestimate the complexities of getting the warring parties to stop fighting," he said. "This is an area where there is an abundance of arms and a readiness to use them."

Mr. Stoltenberg said the international community should continue to provide good offices and assistance to help bring an end to the conflict and to help the parties change course towards peace and reconstruction. However, it was the responsibility of the parties to choose peace over war.

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations had helped avert a humanitarian disaster last year and would now make the difference between survival and disaster for 4.2 million people, Mr. Stoltenberg noted. UNPROFOR had also helped to contain the conflict in Croatia, while the preventive deployment of United Nations forces in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had helped to promote confidence and stability in a potentially volatile area. While fighting continued in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it had lessened in scale and intensity. He went on to say that the parties to the Bosnian conflict should not be invited to further talks under the auspices of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia without a realistic basis for continued negotiations, as another unsuccessful round of talks would only add to frustrations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the historic agreement reached yesterday by participants at South Africa's Multi-Party Negotiations on an interim constitution, according to a United Nations spokesman. The agreement crowned three years of very difficult negotiations and would lay the framework for South Africa's transition to a united, democratic and non-racial country, he said.

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The Secretary-General congratulated all South Africans who had continued to support the peace process despite many impediments, including mounting violence and intimidation. He reiterated that the United Nations would continue to support that process and was ready to help the South African people face the formidable challenges ahead, and with their efforts to facilitate the country's first multi-party democratic elections, scheduled for April 1994.

Welcoming the agreement on the constitution, General Assembly President Samuel Insanally (Guyana) expressed the hope that peace, tolerance and cooperation would prevail in the months leading up to the elections.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, addressing students at the United States Military Academy at West Point this evening, said that the challenges facing the world were more complex in the post-cold war era, and that it was now harder to agree on what action to take. For the United Nations, with its unique global role, it was essential that a balance be found between general inaction and widespread intervention, and between prudence and over-extension.

Participating in the Academy's forty-fifth annual Students Conference on United States Affairs, the Secretary-General said the key to the success of United Nations peace operations was an understanding of and commitment to multilateralism and the multilateral force. To be effective, a multinational United Nations force must be recognised as impartial, with many nations participating; it must appear free of political or economic motives, with no one country's forces or commanders dominating the operation; and it must achieve unity within multilateralism. He said that troop-contributing countries were entitled to know the length of their obligation to a peace-keeping operation, but added that they should also be expected to carry out that obligation in full.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has designated Ahmedou Ould Abdallah as his Special Representative for Burundi with immediate effect. The appointment will be at the Assistant-Secretary-General level and will be for a period of three months initially.

Mr. Ould Abdallah is currently the United Nations Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries. From 1984 to 1991, he served as Special Coordinator for New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy Issues.

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A United Nations court for human rights should be established to deal with disputes between individuals and States, the representative of Italy told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) yesterday as it began consideration of the implementation of human rights instruments. He suggested

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that it could also address disputes arising between States, provided that the defendant State had accepted the court's jurisdiction.

The Italian representative said a special ad hoc body, similar to the European Commission, could be made responsible for setting up the court, regulating its competence, and providing for rules and conditions for individual access to it. He stressed that the will of States to submit to its jurisdiction would be critical to the court's establishment, and that a legally binding international norm should be given the same interpretation and should be applied in the same manner in any part of the world.

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The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People yesterday adopted its report to the General Assembly, calling for intensified international support for the Palestinian people in order to ensure the successful implementation of the peace agreements with Israel. It reaffirmed the "permanent responsibility of the UN with respect to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects".

Chairman Keba Birane Cisse (Senegal) said the Committee would meet again at a time to be announced to consider draft resolutions on the question of Palestine to be presented to the Assembly. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which would be celebrated on 29 November, took on particular importance this year in view of the developments taking place in the Middle East, he said.

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